

THE PROFESSIONAL MARINE COMMUNICATOR
SPECIAL EDITION - MEBA D2 AND R/O - 1988

The following information concerning MEBA District 2 is from various issues of "The Professional Marine Communicator"

*** 35TH CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS (ITF) VOTE IN LUXEMBOURG APPROVE RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ALL SHIPS OF 1600 GRT AND SAILING ON INTERNATIONAL VOYAGES TO CARRY 500 KHZ RADIOTELEGRAPH STATIONS AND RADIO OFFICERS. THE RESOLUTION WAS CARRIED 80-3 WITH MEBA DISTRICT 2 PRESIDENT AND N-MEBA V.P. RAYMOND T. MCKAY, WHOSE MEBA-DISTRICT 2 UNION REPRESENTS RADIO OFFICERS, BEING ONE OF THE THREE VOTING AGAINST THE RESOLUTION. ITF SAYS THAT SUBSTITUTION OF "EQUIVALENTS" LIKE SATCOM IN PLACE OF 500 KHZ AND RADIO OFFICERS WILL NOT ENSURE THE SAFETY OF SEAFARERS. THE RESOLUTION ALSO NOTED THAT EVEN THOUGH ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION A420 (XI) OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) CALLS FOR EXTENSIVE EVALUATION AND PRACTICAL TESTING TO PROVE THAT THE FGMDSS SYSTEM IS MORE RELIABLE THAN THE PRESENT SYSTEM, AND RETENTION OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE FGMDSS HAS BEEN PROVEN TO BE SUPERIOR TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM, VARIOUS COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN SUBSTITUTING "SATCOMM" FOR THE MAIN 500 KHZ TRANSMITTER. THE RESOLUTION FURTHER NOTES THAT NO ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO PROVE THE FGMDSS OR ITS SUBSYSTEMS. AS FOR SUBSTITUTIONS, THE RESOLUTION REMINDS US THAT WITHOUT A RADIO OFFICER ONBOARD, WE CANNOT COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THAT SHIP, NOR CAN THAT SHIP COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH OTHER SHIPS USING LONG RANGE 500 KHZ TELEGRAPHY. THEY ALSO NOTE THAT INMARSAT SATCOMM IS FREQUENTLY PUT OUT OF SERVICE BY UNIDENTIFIED INTERFERENCE ON THE CALL REQUEST CHANNEL (WHICH WITHOUT ACQUIRING A SHIP IS UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE REGARDLESS OF THE POSITION OF THE PRIORITY INDICATOR (E.G. SOS, XXX, TTT) ON THE SATCOMM). SATELLITE OUTAGES, OR SIGNIFICANT DELAY IN CHANGING OVER TO RESERVE SATELLITES. WHEN INMARSAT'S SATELLITE WON'T RESPOND TO A CALL ON ITS REQUEST CHANNEL, OR THE SATELLITE IS OTHERWISE DOWN, THE ENTIRE OCEAN AREA IS LEFT WITHOUT COVERAGE.

JERRY JOSEPH FROM D-2 MEBA IN A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW FEB 25, 1987.

SMU IS CREATION TO GET AMERICAN FLAG. KEEP D2 WHOLE AND SIU WHOLE. FOR THE PURPOSES ARE NON SUPERVISORY PERSONEL NLRB. NO CHANGE WILL BE MADE AS FAR AS R/O IS CONCERNED. D-2 FAVORS DUAL LICENSES, 3RD MATES AND 3RD ASSISTANTS AS RADIO OFFICERS AND NO FCC CONTROL. THEY WANT THE COMPANIES TO DETERMINE WHAT IS OR ISNT NEEDED. JOSEPHS SAID THAT SMU WILL NOT AFFECT THE MAJORITY OF D2 AND SIU JOBS, BUT THE UNIONS WILL REMAIN WHOLE. D2 WANTS TO RETAIN R/O AND E/T. WHEN ASKED ABOUT RAY MCKAY'S COMMENT IN THE JORNAL OF COMMERCE HE SAID, THAT 20 YEARS AGO THE RADIO OFFICER WAS A PRIMA DONNA, AND THAT NOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED, OUR (D-2'S) RADIO OFFICERS ARE WILLING TO GET IN THERE WITH THE BEST OF THEM.

*** SEAFARERS MARITIME UNION, AFL-CIO --- ACCORDING TO A CONFIDENTIAL TELEX SENT ON JANUARY 6, 1987, RED CAMPBELL OF THE SIU HAS CONTACTED ALL PORT REPRS TO "CONTACT THE CREWS OF ALL U.S. FLAG VESSELS AND TUGS IN YOUR AREA THAT DO NOT HAVE CONTRACTS WITH AFL-CIO UNIONS. PLEDGE CARDS WILL BE PROVIDED AS REQUESTED." ACCORDING TO THE LABOR ORGANIZATION INFORMATION REPORT (FORM LM-1) FILED WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ON 28 NOVEMBER 1986, THE "SEAFARERS MARITIME UNION" (SMU), A NATIONAL UNION WITH OFFICES IN CAMP SPRINGS, MD AND AFFILIATED WITH THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, AGLIWD HAS THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS: FRANK DROZAK, CO-CHAIRMAN, RAYMOND MCKAY, CO-CHAIRMAN, ANGUS CAMPBELL, VICE CHAIRMAN, AND JERRY JOSEPH, VICE CHAIRMAN. THE SMU ACCORDING TO THEIR 1986 AGREEMENT, IS THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING REPRESENTATIVE FOR ALL U N L I C E N S E D DECK, ENGINE, STEWARD, AND RADIO DEPARTMENTS EMPLOYED ON THEIR VESSELS. WAGES ARE FOR EIGHT HOUR DAY, OVERTIME BEING PAID IN INCREMENTS OF HALF-HOURS AFTER THE FIRST. (SUPPER RELIEF IS PAID FOR THE HALF HOUR.) NO WEEKEND OR HOLIDAY OVERTIME, BUT A FULL OR PRORATED DAY'S PAY FOR SUCH DAYS. JOINING AND LEAVING DAYS MAY BE PRORATED FOR THE PERIOD THAT AN EMPLOYEE ACTUALLY WORKS. ALL EMPLOYEES SHALL BE ORDERED FROM THE UNION'S MANPOWER OFFICE AT PINEY POINT, MD. EMPLOYEES ACCEPTING EMPLOYMENT ON VESSELS WILL BE EXPECTED TO SERVE ON THOSE VESSELS FOR

A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS UNLESS TERMINATED BY THE COMPANY. EMPLOYEES ARE TO BE CREDITED WITH A TRANSPORTATION ALLOWANCE OF \$4.00 A DAY. EITHER AN ELECTRONIC TECH. OR A RADIO OPERATOR (SIC) SHALL BE CARRIED. MONTHLY BASE: \$2,489.54 (ET), AND \$2,111.78 FOR RADIO OPERATOR. HOURLY O.T.: \$14.36 (ET) AND \$12.18. LISTED IN ADDENDUM "A" ARE WAGES FOR ET, R/O, BOSUN, AB, OS, QMED, GU D/E, STWD BKR, CH COOK, AND STWD ASST. (A TOTAL OF 14 CREWMEMBERS). THE FIRST SHIP TO SAIL UNDER THE SMU BANNER WAS THE AMERICAN CONDOR (PACIFIC GULF MARINE) WHICH SAILED ON DECEMBER 18, 1986. ACCORDING TO A TELEX FROM RED CAMPBELL DATED 19 DECEMBER 1986, "FIVE MORE SHIPS WILL BE CREWED BY THE SMU IN THE NEXT THREE WEEKS, ONE TANKER, ANOTHER RO-RO AND THREE CONTAINER-SHIPS. THE CREWS ON THESE SHIPS WILL BE GENERAL PURPOSE CREWS, WHICH MEANS NO JURISDICTIONAL BOUNDARIES. ALL ORIGINAL CREWS WILL HAVE PERMANENT JOBS. THE TOUR OF DUTY IS 6 MONTHS ON AND THREE MONTHS OFF. THIS MAY BE CHANGED ON A VOYAGE BASIS AT A LATER DATE. ON THE DRY CARGO VESSELS THERE WILL BE ONLY THREE WATCH STANDERS, 3 AB'S. EVERYONE ELSE WILL BE DAY WORKERS... VACATION WILL BE 10 FOR 30... THE NEW UNION WILL HANDLE ANY NEW MILITARY CONTRACTS AND ANY NEW COMPANIES SMU ORGANIZES. THE THREE CONTAINERSHIPS WERE BUILT FOR DELTA LINES IN 1984 BEFORE THEY FOLDED UP. THEY WERE TAKEN OVER BY U.S. LINES. NOW THEY WILL BE TAKEN OVER BY AN SMU OPERATOR. WE EXPECT TO CREW THEM AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR." AB'S GET \$40.21 A DAY, O.T. IS \$6.96. PACIFIC GULF MARINE (PGM) ORIGINALLY HAD THE AMERICAN CONDOR UNDER SIU AND MEBA D-2 CONTRACT. 1985, PGM PLACED ON ITS SHIPS REPRESENTATIVES OF A "MARAD SPONSORED" SHIP MANAGEMENT CONSULTING FIRM WHOSE PURPOSE WAS TO SEE IF "ALL PURPOSE CREWS" COULD WORK ON THIS SHIP. (I WAS TOLD BY ONE OF THE CONSULTANTS AS SOON AS HE ENTERED THE RADIO ROOM ON PGM'S SHIP THE "MV AMERICAN EAGLE": "I REALLY FEEL SORRY FOR YOU BECAUSE OF ALL THE PEOPLE ONBOARD, YOU WILL BE THE ONLY ONE WHO WILL NOT HAVE A JOB LEFT. IT'S SAD BECAUSE YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW YOUR JOB VERY WELL." IN OTHER WORDS, PART OF THE INTENT OF THE "SURVEY" WAS A FORGONE CONCLUSION: ELIMINATE THE RADIO ELECTRONICS OFFICER. - ED.) IN JUNE PROCOMM UNDERSTANDS THAT SIU AND NMU WERE TALKING ABOUT MERGER. ACCORDING TO AFL-CIO SOURCES, AFL-CIO PRESIDENT LANE KIRKLAND APPROVED OF SIU PRESIDENT FRANK DROZAK'S PLAN FOR UNITING THE VARIOUS MARITIME UNIONS AND ON GOING TALKS BETWEEN THE SIU AND NMU WERE SCHEDULED FOR THE FUTURE. ACCORDING TO AN INDUSTRY SOURCE, FRANK DROZAK AND JERRY JOSEPHS CAME ABOARD THE "MV AMERICAN CONDOR" IN CHARLESTON, S.C. AND LAID OUT THE "NEW DEAL" PERSONALLY. THERE REPORTEDLY WAS MUCH DISAGREEMENT AND SEVERAL OFFICERS WERE TOLD THAT THEY EITHER COOPERATE, OR THEY WOULD BE TERMINATED AND RELIEVED IMMEDIATELY... "PLAY BALL OR ELSE", AS THE SOURCE REPORTED. INSIDE SOURCES SAY THAT THEY FEEL THAT D-2 AND THE SIU ARE REALLY TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE MARINE INDUSTRY, AND UNION OFFICIALS LAMENT THAT THE SMU IS LOWERING THE STANDARDS OF MARINE EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL CREWMEMBERS INSTEAD OF TRYING TO IMPROVE THE SEAFARERS LOT.

General Docket No. 88-39

An Editorial from *The Professional Marine Communicator*

The FCC has before it General docket No. 88-39 which, according to information received by PROCOMM, is the result of a major lobbying effort by Marine Engineers Beneficial Association District 2 (MEBA D2) and its Washington, DC liason Mr. Edward Kelly. The Docket, if adopted, would change the requirements for the six months service endorsement to allow service performed on radiotelephone-only ships. PROCOMM believes that the underlying reason for D2's efforts, which they say is necessitated by a "shortage" of Radio Officers, is to attack Radio Officer's jobs on D2 vessels. Readers may remember the mention in earlier issues concerning the creation of an unlicensed Radio Operator (sic) rating in the SMU. We believe that this

initiative in changing the six months service endorsement to make it easier to obtain is both an effort to degrade the Radio Officer's position and to allow other personnel to take over the duties of the Radio Officer, as MEBA D2 has already done on other vessels they man such as the WESTWARD VENTURE and the GREAT LAND. Both vessels are still required by the FCC to sail with a "Radio Operator" who is responsible for operating and maintaining the ship's radio equipment. However, instead of requiring a Radio Officer with a FCC radiotelegraph license, a crew member with a General Radio Telephone license performs the radio duties. This crewmember has taken over the duties of the Radio Officer whose job has been lost. Both shipowner and MEBA D2 are discriminating in favor of a less qualified "radio operator".

We believe that the motives of D2 are suspect. This union has done little to improve the Radio Art. We have received numerous letters from D2 Radio Officers, who having the report of this latest "bomb shell", are shocked by D2's actions. In fact, we have heard that D2 staffmembers were "urging the Radio Officers to support this proposal and write to the FCC saying they have no objections to the proposed rule changes." In fact, many Radio Officers so contacted by D2 wrote to the FCC with strong **objections**.

According to our sources, MEBA D2 is *already* shipping out Radio Officers without six month service endorsement on government contracted radiotelephone-only ships. After six months service, the Radio Officers were, according to our sources, sent by MEBA D2 to *"An office in Washington, DC"*. There they received a license stamped with a six months endorsement. MEBA D2 wants this to become standard procedure. Fortunately in the cases of which I have knowledge, both people are ex- Coast Station Operators, who at least have **some** knowledge of shipboard radiotelegraphy.

I wrote to the FCC and made the following observations:

I recently became aware of General docket No. 88-39. I wish to give you some comments on this matter.

Prior to the issuance of FCC Field Operations Bulletin FO-7 titled "Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificates" in March 1987, six months Service endorsements were issued on a term of 180 days. Port time, weekends, and other time off from radio watches were not considered in the computation of time for the endorsement. Also, the one year service time requirement for the First-class Radiotelegraph Certificate was computed on a calendar year basis, with time off for weekends, holidays, and vacations not being counted against the time needed for prior service. In 1980, I had my father write the Commission to determine the time needed; the commission replied 180 calendar days. The Commission had previously required similar service time for the Amateur Extra Class license of two years of experience as an amateur operator. This likewise was computed on a calendar year basis with no requirement for hours spent in actual operation. I believe that the Commission should return to the previous manner of determining the amount of time required for the six months service endorsement.

The Commission states in paragraph 4 of GEN Docket 88-37 that only 50 six months endorsements have been issued during the last five years. However, the Commission does not include figures from the years preceding 1983. According to a letter from L.R. Langley, Radio Operators Branch, F.C.C. in response to a letter dated 16 Jan. 1988 from Mr. Roy Jones, the FCC issued the following six months endorsements.

1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977
11	15	5	9	14	26	35	46	50	65	34

From 1979 to 1982, the three years preceding the Commission's figures, there were 167 new six months

endorsements. During the past ten years from 1977 to 1987 there were 310 new six months service endorsements issued. According to the Commission's records, 3831 second class Radiotelegraph licenses were current at the end of 1987, and 1964 First class Radiotelegraph licenses. This is a total of 5795 valid licenses.

I believe that the motives of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association - Associated Marine Officers District 2 (MEBA D2) are suspect. (See attached letter.) Due to a declining Merchant Marine, there is no shortage of Radio Officers. I myself refuse to work for MEBA D2 because of the decline pay offered to Radio Officers. With wages in Boston for unskilled labor nearing \$9.00 to \$11.00 per hour, it barely justifies the hardship experienced by going to sea and leaving a family or children. MEBA D2 has ships such as the MV AMERICAN FALCON which pay \$1600 a month. Many Radio Officers, including myself, refuse to work for such wages. There is already a method to increase the supply of available Radio Officers: Raise the wages.

Because of the yearly graduation from the United States Maritime Colleges, the number of entry level Engineers, and Mates is quite large, and according to the laws of supply and demand, one could predict the current situation of decreasing wages. However, Radio Officers do not enter from the steady stream of graduates from the maritime colleges. They enter from the military service, and related radio fields. In other words, Radio Officers enter the market place as a matter of choice.

There are other problems with being "represented" by MEBA D2 are some of its actions concerning the status of Radio Officers: The ships on which MEBA D2 "represents" Radio Officers have had several important firsts:

The first passenger ships to run without Radio Officers (The SS OCEANIC CONSTITUTION and SS OCEANIC INDEPENDANCE).

The first ship over 1600 grt in international trade without a Radio Officer (The MV BRAVADO).

The first two cargo ships in the Alaskan Trade to be exempted from carrying Radio Officers (The SS GREAT LAND and SS WESTERN VENTURE).

Certainly few Radio Officers would work for such an organization which seems to be constantly allowing the elimination of the Radio Officer's position from vessels which it crews.

The First Class Radio Telegraph and Second Class Radio Telegraph are the highest licenses issued by the Commission. The next highest license is the General Radio Telephone Certificate. The difference between the licenses is that the holders of Radio Telegraph license operators certificates are allowed to operate manually operated Telegraph stations. To allow a Six month endorsement to be issued on a radiotelephone only ship is like allowing a tractor trailer motor vehicle license to be granted by testing out on a compact car. The licenses are for varying levels of skill. As we would not allow inexperienced tractor trailer drivers on our highways, neither should we allow radio operators who are inexperienced in the operation of a manual Radiotelegraph system to be certified as qualified to use it.

The Commission has in the past not allowed Navy ship experience to qualify an applicant because the Navy no longer guards the 500 kHz radiotelegraphy distress frequency. I believe this is good sense, as to be unfamiliar with the operation of the present distress system of manual radiotelegraphy would be unwise and could prove disastrous to the passengers and crews of ships.

Although the Commission may be of the belief that Government should not perscribe safety requirements to shipping companies, the Commission must be mindful, that it was originally chartered to place Radio Officers on ships and maintain Safety at Sea. I believe that the Commission has seriously violated this duty by allowing ships to sail without Radio Officers within 150 miles from the U.S. Coast. Perhaps these ships are close enough to communicate with Coast Guard Radio Stations on 2182 kHz Voice Distress frequency, but these ships no longer can serve as effective lifeboats for distressed vessels more distant from shore which rely upon radiotelegraphy. The

Commission may be reminded that the communications link between its monitoring stations, although primarily operating on radioteletype, reverts to manual morse operation during periods of difficult communications, as do the stations of U.S. Embassies in various locations.

It is much easier to modify a defective Radiotelegraph transmitter to key morse, as almost any point can be interrupted and keyed to produce morse code, and because these transmitters are made of individual components. Satcoms are made of many tiny sensitive Integrated Circuits (IC's) which contain hundreds of microscopic components, which if no exact spare IC is available do not lend themselves to any form of emergency repair.

Moreover, in a completely automated system such as the INMARSAT satellite communications system, if the CALL REQUEST format, the frequency synthesiser, the TDM modulator, or any other circuitry is inoperative, or if the satellite itself is out of order as it was for over three hours in April 1987, then the ENTIRE SYSTEM is UNUSABLE for ANY type of communications INCLUDING DISTRESS.

Automated types of marine communications are not as forgiving of variance. If the REQUEST MESSAGE for the satellite is not **pulse perfect**, there can be no communications through the satellite. A manual system which is manned by either ships, or ships and shore stations, for 24 hours daily is much more forgiving of any imperfections. This system has been demonstrated again and again to be reliable. To deprive a Radio Officer of such on-the-air training in this system could prove disastrous. I know that I would not be able to perform adequately as a Radio Officer had it not been for the six months I spent learning everything I could "picking the brain" of the accompanying Radio Officer during the six months I spent as an Assistant Radio Officer.

In summary, I believe that the Commission should NOT change the requirements for the six months endorsement for the above listed reasons. I believe that the Commission should require six months to be served on a calendar year basis of 180 days, that is identical to the requirements the Commission required prior to the issuance of FO-7 in March 1987.

Sincerely,



David J. Ring, Jr.

Editor

"The Professional Marine Communicator"

IS THE SMU QUIETLY FOLDING ITS TENT AND STEALING... AWAY INTO THE NIGHT?

The Seafarers Maritime Union (SMU), thought to have been conceived in an attempt to forestall any merger of the NMU and SIU may well be on its way "out". SMU has been accused of setting up substandard wages, benefits, and working conditions in the Maritime Industry. Extreme criticism has been noted from the SIU and MEBA District 2, from within the ranks. There have been instances where D2 people have reported to SMU ships, unknowing that they were going on a competing union's ship, being pressured to sign on with the SMU, thus losing their D2 affiliation, and even being offered "under the table" wages. Contracts affecting D2 and SIU have been affected, by lowering the conditions and wages to SMU level, thus infuriating the members of D2 and SIU. There has been a high rate of turnover in the SMU.

Rumor has it that Mr. McKay of D2 has been looking for a way out of the SMU set-up because the ill-conceived operation has proven to be not economical and not effective, in addition to arousing the ire of D2 membership.

Likewise the late Frank Droznack attracted the ire of SIU ILLGL membership. No word has been reached concerning the new direction of SIU under the reported new leadership of the Sacco brothers.

discussed at a recent SOHIO conference in Cleveland, Ohio. According to our sources, the THOMPSON PASS and the BROOKS RANGE could **not** comply with all provisions of law that would allow the loss of Radio Officers onboard these vessels.

PROCOMM notes however that IOM had taken off the Radio Officers on the Tacoma, WA to Anchorage, AK run of the **WESTWARD VENTURE** and the **GREAT LAND**. According to a copy of a letter obtained by PROCOMM to IOM from Mr. Jerry Josephs of **MEBA-D2** to Mr. Robert Rogers of IOM that, according to Josephs, the "minimum manning" provisions of the **IOM-MEBA D2** contract applies, and that the union [**MEBA D2**] has no objections to the removal of the radio officers from those vessels. Inter-Ocean Management (IOM) has requested that the **BROOKS RANGE** and **THOMPSON PASS** be exempted from carrying Radio Officers on their Valdez, AK to Puerto Armuelles, Panama route. It is assumed that like **EXXON**, no Radio Officers will be carried when sailing within 500 miles of the coast. The **MEBA-D2** Radio Officers learned of this from their vessel's representatives who said this was

*This issue was undated but
must have been published
some time in 1988 as it mentions
F.C.C. General Docket 88-39 and
88-37.*

David J Ring, Jr. Editor
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